

the country including cases involving subordinate offices, line directorates and field formations. The cases involving line directorates and field formations are handled and monitored directly by them. The details are being collected and the same will be laid on the Table of the House.

Private and foreign investments in higher education

***312. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering any steps to encourage private and foreign investment in higher education;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government are treating higher education as a private good, rather than merit good, only to satisfy the GATS conditionality; and

(d) if not, what is the basis for Government's submission of revised offers at WTO on August 24, 2005?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Private and foreign investment is already allowed in the higher education sector in India. Government has *vide* Press Note 2 (2000 Series) dated 11.02.2000 permitted Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) up to 100% on the automatic route in the education sector. A proposal for the regulation of entry and operation, maintenance of quality, and prevention of commercialization of education by Foreign Educational Institutions in Higher Education is currently under consideration of the Government.

(c) and (d) As per the classification of services adopted under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the WTO *vide* document number MTN.GNS/W/120 dated 10 July, 1991 of the WTO, Education Services cover (i) Primary education services, (ii) Secondary education services, (iii) Higher education services, (iv) Adult education services and (v) Other education services. However, public education services, provided free of cost on a non-commercial basis and not in competition with other service suppliers is outside the purview of GATS. In our Revised Offer, under Education services, we have offered to take partial commitments, with adequate checks and balances, only in Higher Education Services. The Revised Offer is conditional and can be modified or withdrawn at any time during the negotiations.